

MOVING ON

Newsletter of the New American Movement

Winter 1976

NAM active in moves to check corporate control of utilities

If there's a grass roots movement of the '70s that surprised everyone---the Left and the powers-that-be, it's probably the campaigns that have sprung up around the country against the utilities companies. In January of 1974, NAM's National Committee noted the budding of this movement and urged chapters to get involved. Since that time the movement has blossomed and stuck some real thorns in the side of the power industry. In some cities, NAM chapters have played a vital role in this process.

The movement has been largely local and often spontaneous in its formation. Demands have ranged from opposition to rate hikes to changing the rate structure to halting the growth of nuclear power. Underlying all the testimony at public hearing, demonstrations at company headquarters, petitioning on street corners and legislative pressure at the state house, has been the question of who controls and profits from our natural resources. The very existence of public regulatory bodies suggests that the public has a right to make these decisions. So the question of public ownership and democratic control has never been far from the surface of this movement. NAM chapters working on utilities have tried to bring it out into the open---to raise the issue of worker and consumer control, while being clear about the limitations of public ownership under capitalism.

Mad River NAM in Dayton has been at the heart of one of the most well-organized utilities coalitions in the country for the past several months. The chapter formed the Miami-Valley Power Project nearly two years ago. Since then, the MVPP, a mass membership organization, has fought for public hearings that are accessible to the public; a no-shut-offs policy; and against rate increases. It has gained a reputation in Dayton as a serious force and has built up a multi-racial network of community groups and individuals against Dayton Power and Light.

Last Spring, the MVPP became part of a state-wide coalition (Ohioans for Utility Reform) to work for ballot initiatives on utilities in the November elections. The initiative process in Ohio hadn't been used since 1949 because of the prohibitive number of signatures required to get on the ballot. But OUR set to work and as the campaign gathered

ACORN begins Missouri organizing--focus on neighborhoods and sales tax

Sales tax is among the most regressive of taxes. Everyone pays at the same rate, no matter what their ability. In many states the major share of state revenue is generated by the sales tax. And in many of these, all items---including necessities like food and medicine---are taxed.

Last spring a small group of inspired St. Louis residents decided that the time had come to challenge Missouri's reliance on the food and drug sales tax. They set about collecting the signatures needed to place a measure on the state ballot to repeal the tax. Working 60 hour weeks in front of supermarkets, and with some important help from the state's Catholic Church, the group garnered 165,000 signatures in two months. They were on the ballot.

Election campaigns are difficult affairs, and they require both money and organization. The less you have of one, the more you need of the other. The small crew that placed the measure on the ballot had neither, and they had little prospect of raising the money required to run a big media campaign. So they began to build an organization.

They contacted a proven builder of organizations for help. ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) was started in 1970 in Little Rock, Arkansas. Little Rock was a symbol of racist reaction through the sixties, but ACORN quickly touched the radical populist roots in Arkansas tradition. In six years ACORN has grown into an association of 70 neighborhood organizations in Little Rock alone. It has associated groups in other parts of the state as well, and newer affiliated in five other states. It has become such a factor in Arkansas that Robert Sarver, a former Arkansas Prison Commissioner, has commented, "It's got as much clout as organized labor here."

ACORN staffers journeyed to St. Louis where they set about training the tax reform group in the skills of neighborhood organizing. They targetted neighborhoods with low and moderate income residents and began knocking on doors. They talked about the sales tax reform and asked about local grievances. Out of these initial contacts grew a small core of committed neighborhood people who fanned out to every door in the area.

The first public meeting in the first neighborhood organ-

continued on page 12

continued on page 11

NAM plans Winter Institutes

2

Last June NAM held its first summer training schools. There were week-long sessions held in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Boston, with two or three members from each chapter in the area delegated to "go back to school." It was a very intense week designed to cover both theoretical and more practical topics. Some of the theoretical subjects were "General Approaches to Strategy," "Class Structure," "Socialist-Feminism" and "Theories of Racism." A good amount was spent on issues ranging from union organizing and community organizing to chapter fund-raising.

In each school some of the most popular sessions included role-playing: after presentations on "Building an Effective Revolutionary Organization" or "How to Choose Issues for Organizing," the group was divided up into three person "steering committees" that had to work through assigned problems and present their conclusion to the rest of the group for discussion. Such exercises helped accomplish several of the goals of the schools---integrating more theoretical topics into the concrete tasks chapters face, helping to develop leadership skills in NAM, and getting people in different chapters and regions better acquainted.

The reaction to the schools was so good, everyone agreed we should have them again next summer. In addition, the National Interim Committee has agreed that a shorter version of the schools should take place this winter---probably over the holiday week-end of February 19-21. The tentative location for the Winter Institutes, as they're being called, are San Francisco, Chicago, and New York. The topics haven't been determined yet, though it will be a mix again of theory and skills. We expect to be able to draw again on many of the excellent resource people who helped to make the summer schools such a success.

Pitch in!

We think that you'll agree with us once you've looked through this newsletter that NAM is a vital organization. That its efforts at organizing and education within the framework of democratic socialism are meaningful and worth supporting. Won't you help? Fill-out the coupon below and send it in with your first monthly pledge to aid our efforts.

NAME

ADDRESS

PLEDGE PER MONTH



TRIEU THI TRUNH

Carolina Alliance holds founding conference

North Carolina is the home of the J.P. Stevens Company, one of the most reactionary anti-labor corporations in the country. North Carolina is the state which has the most people on death row in the country. And North Carolina has one of the lowest per capita incomes of any state in the union. But things are changing in North Carolina. The workers at J.P. Stevens are moving to organize a union. A Brown Lung Movement has grown up to fight for the rights of those who were disabled working in the textile mills. And the People's Alliance For A Cooperative Commonwelath has formed.

The People's Alliance, begun over a year ago by a core group which included members of NAM, is based on a populist tradition of building working people's activity and power. In mid-September, the Alliance held its founding convention with over 100 people in attendance. The convention provided a forum for looking back on the work of the past year --- in union organizing, in utilities, and more. And it helped to formulate new directions and ideas for the groups's activity in each of these areas.

The Convention also adopted a PACC statement of purpose. It envisions a goal of a "cooperative rather than a profit-oriented society" and pledges itself to work to "unite people working for progressive change into a majority movement with strength to win victories." It stresses the importance of rediscovering the history of working people in North Carolina and of opposing racism and sexism.

The PACC is not a socialist organization, but it differs from many of the other new populist groups in that it places a conscious emphasis on political education. This is done partly through the people's history programs which have broad outreach to labor and community groups, and partly through their ongoing membership study groups, which have been examining traditions of populism and socialism in North Carolina.

Carter--new struggles ahead?

by the NAM Political Committee

The elections are over and there are a lot of questions in the air about what a Carter presidency is going to mean. We don't have any clear answers yet, but there are a few things that it's possible to say with some degree of certainty. First and most basically, the contradictions of capitalism are not going to be patched up simply by putting a Democrat in office. Since the late 1960s, the world capitalist system has been profoundly shaken by a wave of economic set-backs. The U.S. is only beginning to recover from the worst recession in over thirty years and the economy is still shaky. Unemployment remains high and the rate of inflation fluctuates. Although the U.S. has managed to maintain its hegemony in the world---because it is the only capitalist country that did not have to contend with an angry working class in the face of a reduced standard of living---its prestige and maneuverability have been weakened both at home and abroad. The central cities continue to decay and have few prospects for resolving on their own the fiscal crises that are now stalking across the country. More and more studies show that schools are not educating children and the pressures for funds for education will increase. Promises of national health insurance and more jobs have created expectations of major changes in this country's social welfare policy.

These are the needs---some of them very basic---that must be met to provide even the semblance of the "good life" that mythically characterizes this country. And these are the demands that working people will have of the new administration. How will Carter respond? It isn't a question really of whether Carter personally wants to meet them. Because it's not a matter of personal choice. As a president of the U.S. who is committed to maintaining its status as the major world capitalist power, Carter will have other powerful demands made upon him which he dare *not* ignore. These are the demands made by the necessity to revitalize capitalism, and with it, corporate profits and power. These demands will all tend to push against social spending, liberalization of repressive legislation against unions, and so on. Carter's administration will most likely be fraught with the tension between trying to satisfy these needs of capital and trying to appease his working class constituency. It is unlikely that he'll succeed at both.

Secondly, and most importantly, we can say that the extent to which Carter does succeed in living comfortably with this tension will depend on the extent to which the working class is able to actively struggle to extract what has been promised to it (and more). The outcome of Carter's presiden-

cy will be determined by this question of class struggle, for it is naive to hope that Carter will give more than token concessions without such struggle. There is little doubt that over the past years working people have been largely cynical and inactive, pushed to respond only in defense of existing rights. Is it possible to expect that a movement (or movements) can be built that can press not just for what has been, but for what could be?

We don't believe that such a movement is by any means a certainty, but we do believe it is a possibility. The rising expectations caused by campaign promises, the likely changes of personnel in such areas as affirmative action, the stated commitments to racial equality---all of these can help to open up space for new struggle to emerge. It will take time and solid organizing, but the missing element---the will to act---may again emerge. The key thing to remember is that a Carter administration cannot be depended on any more than other politicians. It is only more subject to pressure, and concessions will only be won through applying that pressure.

For us in NAM this means that we should not expect immediate or dramatic changes, but should continue on the *continued on page 13*



Ruling party upset in Puerto Rican elections

As we go to press, the results of the elections in Puerto Rico are still unofficial. Nonetheless, it is clear that the New Progressive Party, backed by the Ford administration, has decisively defeated the incumbent Popular Democrats, supported by the Carter forces, in gaining the governorship, control of both houses of the legislature, as well as many municipalities.

The New Progressive Party (NPP) headed by Carlos Romero Barcelo, Mayor of San Juan, is the pro-statehood party, whereas the Popular Democratic Party (PPD), headed by Governor Rafael Hernandez Colon, supports continuation of the island's 24 year old Commonwealth status. The Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP) and the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP), who both support independence, are estimated to have polled a combined 6 per cent of the voting electorate.

The American press has heralded these results---that over 90 per cent of Puerto Rican voters supported parties favoring permanent union with the U.S.---as proof of a decisive lack of support for the "self-determination and independence" of Puerto Rico by the Puerto Rican people. The PSP rejects this analysis.

In a NAM interview, Antonnio Hernandez, PSP Zone Coordinator in Chicago, explained that the NPP's campaign on government corruption and administrative mismanagement had effectively discredited the PPD. The se-

vere depression (40 per cent unemployment) is an utterly debilitating situation for Puerto Ricans and the PNP gained support from their promise of improved economic conditions. He believes that this development reflects a desperate attempt by many Puerto Ricans to break the strangling effects of the depression.

Hernandez pointed-out that the pro-statehood party had repeatedly avoided any discussion of the political status of Puerto Rico, contending that this was not an election issue. He noted that Pedro Grant and Carlos Gallisa, pro-independence socialist candidates for the House and Senate respectively, have good prospects of winning. The pro-independista vote was larger than in two decades, though still clearly weak. The major reason for this ostensible lack of support was that PSP and PIP did not have the necessary legitimacy---they were not seen as viable and sufficiently broad based political forces. The PSP had recognized this crucial problem, along with limited resources and experience, in the initial stages of the campaign. Consequently, they sought to participate in the elections in a united front with the other independence parties. These attempts were not successful and the efforts to

¡Puerto Rico libre!



Juan Mari Brás

gain *independista* electoral victories were hampered as a result.

The PSP participation in the electoral arena has been a lively and important topic of discussion among progressive forces in the U.S. Hernandez emphasized, "The PSP understood that the fruit of our campaign would not be measured in the number of votes we gained. We are enthusiastic in the extent to which we did accomplish our major goal---to popularize socialism and the program of the PSP."

He said that as in the U.S., there were televised political debates among the party candidates and that, as a result of its electoral campaign, the PSP participated in those debates. In surveys conducted by the sponsors following the debates, a majority of people indicated that they felt the PSP most clearly articulated the facts of the Puerto Rican experience and the Party's own political perspective. Though this should not be equated with unconditional support for the PSP, it, along with many other aspects of electoral participation, did bring the Party from a semi-isolated position in terms of the official political milieu to a position by which they came to be an often discussed force by both the political candidates the people. That is, they came to be recognized as a legitimate political force that must be addressed and answered.

Squeezing blood from stones -- NAM hits city budget and tax policies in Massachusetts

A pamphlet entitled "Blood from a Stone?" has suddenly propelled NAM's Middlesex chapter to the center of the political stage in Somerville, Massachusetts. The pamphlet is a critique of the city's taxation, budget, banking and administrative policies. It has been enthusiastically received by residents who are finding their tax burdens growing while business' shrinks.

"Blood from a Stone?" was first distributed at a meeting called by Somerville United Neighborhoods (SUN), an Alinsky-style citizens action group. It accuses the city of giving special tax abatement breaks to business interests in Somerville, while the local property tax rate on private homes has soared. It accuses the School Committee of budgeting excessive amounts for administrative salaries while the quality of education deteriorates. It shows how the city gets a poor return on its investment dollar because of poor monetary management policies. And it argues that the property tax itself is an unfair and regressive way to fund city government.

When news of the pamphlet reached the city's official hierarchy they were outraged. Alderman Frank Bakey, noting that the SUN meeting took place in a public school, called for a new ordinance that would prevent the distribution of such literature in public hearings.

In the next weeks NAM members appeared at meetings of the School Committee and the Board of Assessors to raise their criticisms.

The Board of Assessors had proudly proclaimed that their records were public and that all interested parties would be welcome at their meetings. But when NAM arrived with their well-documented research, tempers flared. The *Somerville Journal* described the meeting: "(NAM) was met with harassing and intimidating behavior on the part of the board; what began as a sharp exchange soon escalated to an aggressive confrontation." The newspaper went on to question, "Is this behavior becoming of our elected officials? (Should they) undermine any hope of reasonable dialogue?"

In spite of the criticisms, the Assessors did not stop with insulting NAM members at the meeting. They subsequently order a set of five inspections of a home belonging to NAM members. The inspections were allegedly designed to make a determination of the tax status of the house--was it a single family residence or a rooming house?

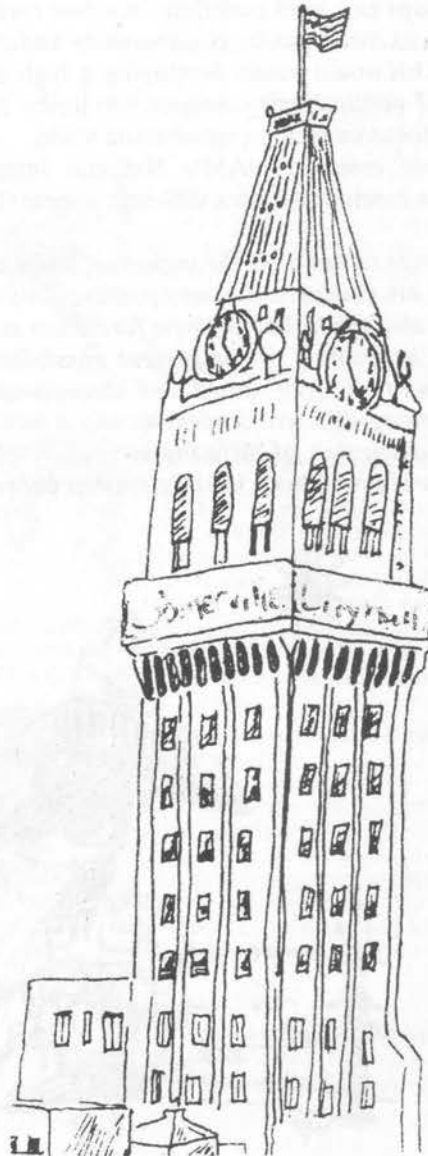
The *Journal* offers another explanation: "If this week's inspection was triggered by NAM's criticisms of the assessors or the group's stated socialist orientation, this must be seen as an attempt on the part of elected officials to limit free speech. And this cannot be tolerated."

The attacks on NAM have livened up the complicated issues surrounding city tax and budget policies. Many other groups have involved themselves in the fight, including

Massachusetts Fair Share, the Somerville Educational Association, the Somerville Federation of Teachers, SUN and more.

NAM continues to research the situation and develop an understanding that the city's corrupt practices are not haphazard. They consistently favor the business community and entrenched interests.

If working people in Somerville are able to forge a united front against those interests, real inroads can be made against the powers that rule Somerville and "Blood from a Stone?" will have served its purpose.



July 4th Coalition seeks new focus

You wouldn't have known it from reading your local newspaper or watching television, the July 4th Coalition accomplished its first goal---it brought tens of thousands of people to Philadelphia on the 4th of July to demand independence for Puerto Rico, jobs for all, and an end to repression and discrimination. But as the media black-out indicated, such a demonstration cannot be an end in itself. It is a step in building a movement that will be heard and that ultimately can win those demands---that is the basic goal of the July 4th Coalition. An "Interim Committee" (IC) was formed in July to explore how the Coalition could best proceed toward that goal.

The IC has had several discussions on the direction the Coalition should go in. The Mass Party Organizing Committee has argued for the formation of a "People's Alliance" that would unite groups and local coalitions in a new formation that would have its own basis of political unity and programmatic work. This would mean developing a high and more defined level of political unity than existed in the July 4th Coalition, and a focus on local programmatic work.

At its September meeting, NAM's National Interim Committee adopted a resolution with a different approach---

NAM views the attempt to build on the important unity and solidarity of the July 4th Coalition as a very positive development. However, we also think that any new formation must be built on a sound assessment of the present possibilities. The Left in this country is fragmented and disorganized. There is suspicion among different tendencies and a lack of communication and discussion of differing views. In addition, there is the central problem of the relationship between

predominantly white groups and the formations of national minorities. Each of these aspects must be treated with a great deal of sensitivity. The July 4th Coalition was an important step---but only a beginning one---in the historic task of bringing about a new political realignment in this country. We should proceed carefully and realistically in taking the next step.

At this time, it appears that the IC is moving in this direction---coordinating national program and not pushing for immediate political unity.

As of mid-November, it has been agreed that there should be four areas of concern---the struggle in Southern Africa; the (master) plans in many cities to move third world and poor people out of the central city and replace them with middle class hi-rises and business (Plan 21 in Chicago, Team 4 Plan in St. Louis, etc.); racism and racist attacks on black and other third world people in the U.S.; exposes of the role of the CIA and FBI in repressing people's movements. They also agreed that at the present time, the July 4th Coalition should concentrate its work on just one of these, the struggle in South Africa. The national conference that will discuss these recommendations has been scheduled for March. It is possible that regional conferences will be held before that to discuss local activities and their relation to the national July 4th Coalition.

Given the inactivity of local July 4th Coalitions, it's not clear whether the national discussions will have real meaning for work around the country. Perhaps, as indicated in the NAM NIC statement, the best we can hope is that the July 4th Coalition, as a national body, can remain active as a means of bringing together different groups---particularly third world groups in common program.



ACTWU leads boycott, organizing drive on at J.P. Stevens

Like some politicians, big business has a "Southern Strategy." For business, it means increasing operations in the South where the unions are weak or non-existent, and the wages very low. Businesses that stay in the North use the threat of a move to the South, and this has been effective in the fight against union demands for better wages, or demands to install anti-pollution equipment. This Southern Strategy is not new and for over 30 years unions have periodically launched organizing attempts in the South. These attempts have mostly resulted in failure.

In the early 1960s the Textile Workers Union (TWU) started a campaign to organize J.P. Stevens, the second largest textile manufacturer in the country. This set-off illegal retaliation by the company reminiscent of the battles of the '30s. In Hearings before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) and various Federal Courts, J.P. Stevens has achieved the miserable distinction of having broken labor laws more than any other company in history. Former chairperson of the NLRB, Boyd Leedon, was forced to say that "J.P. Stevens is so out of touch with a humane, civilized approach to industrial relations that it should shock even those least sensitive to honor, justice, and decent treatment."

In spite of Stevens' illegal firing and harassment, in 1974 the TWU won the right to bargain for Stevens employees in plants in Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina. In 1976 there is still not a contract---the company refuses to discuss such issues as arbitration for grievance procedures, dues check-off or criteria for promotion or lay-off.

However, the TWU is no longer alone in fighting J.P. Stevens; in June it merged with the Amalgamated Clothing Workers to form the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU). And the AFL-CIO has indicated that the drive at Stevens is its top priority. It is backing the ACTWU with money and staff.

The AFL-CIO is not doing this out of altruism for a member union, but because it sees this as the first critical step in organizing the South. If labor doesn't win here, corporate Southern Strategy could destroy many of the victories of the '30s.

The ACTWU has recognized that it can not win if it cannot produce a contract once it has won bargaining rights in a plant. They know that the labor board and

the Federal Courts are unable or unwilling to force Stevens and its owner Bob Stevens (former secretary of the Army) to sign a decent contract. The union and AFL-CIO is mounting a nation-wide consumer boycott of J.P. Stevens products to force the company to bargain in good faith.

NAM passed a resolution at its National Convention in August calling on all chapters to support the boycott. As was said in that resolution, "The textile organizing drive in the South is vital to cracking the non-union status of Southern Labor. The drive will have particular significance because it is aimed at one of the most racist and reactionary companies in the South and has a special focus on united black and white workers. A number of chapters have discussed how best to build the boycott in their area, and one of the union's National Coordinators has met with NAM's National Office Staff to see how NAM can aid the boycott. We urge individuals to call the ACTWU or the Central Labor Council office in their area to find-out how they can participate in the boycott.

What Stevens workers say:



Addie Jackson, Statesboro, Georgia

"At J. P. Stevens, before we started organizing, it wasn't too much different than slavery. No lunch hour. Just eat your sandwich while running your machines. I thought that was the most terrible thing I ever heard of. And then Stevens closes the plant. They shut us out... that's what they said they'd do and that's what they did. Teach us a lesson."



Maurine Hedgepeth, Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina

"I testified on behalf of other workers before the NLRB in September, 1964. Two weeks after that I went on pregnancy leave. I was supposed to go back to work in January 1965. When I went back to get my job they told me there were no jobs available. And they'd fired my husband the day before Christmas. after twenty five years as a loom fixer. A new baby and neither of us had a job



James Boone, Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina

"In every department at the plant where I work, there are violations of the safety regulations. The company has a safety committee that goes around the plant every month, but it's a different group of people every month, and they don't know what to look for. The company seems to purposely pick the people who don't know what to look for to serve on this committee."



Thomas Malone, retired Stevens employee

"After 37 years of loyal and faithful service, I have a plaque, \$1,360 and brown lung."

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Angelo Donghia

TOWELS

Fine Arts
Tastemaker
Utica
BLANKETS
Forstmann
Utica

CARPETS

Contender
Gulistan
Merryweather
Tastemaker
TABLE LINEN
Simtex
HOSIERY
Big Mama
Finesse
Hip-Lets
Spirit

Labor stirring -- will the sleeping giant arise?

It's too early to say for sure what's going on, but there is a growing sense that there is something brewing in the labor movement in this country. The attempt by the ACTWU to crack the seemingly unorganizable South through its J.P. Stevens campaign. The Sadlowski reform movement in steel. The miners' wildcats. The new rank and file movements in the corrupt Teamsters Union. The incipient organizing of office and clerical workers. All of the developments could pre-empt an end to an era of labor peace that has given birth to the myth of the "happy" American workers.

Such developments make it all the more urgent, and possible, that a left presence develop within the trade union movement. The U.S. is perhaps the only major advanced capitalist country whose labor movement is not as a whole--or in large part--an anti-capitalist force. The transformation of the labor movement in this country is probably the single most important task of the socialist left. And it may be the single most difficult--because of the complex history of both the left and the labor movement--their early marriage and painful divorce.

The seventies began with only the barest stirrings of an opposition force within trade unions to the labor/government/business consensus. Probably the most dramatic example of the strength of this consensus was the AFL-CIO's willingness to sit out the '72 election and thereby put in a clear foe of labor like Richard Nixon rather than support the generally pro-labor "radical" McGovern. A small left remained alive within the trade union movement, and played a particularly vital role in organizing opposition to the Vietnam War, but on the whole the organized Left--NAM included--had little base in or knowledge of the labor movement.

There have been a lot of changes over the last four or five years--growing militance within the unions and a growing stress on the importance of the labor-related work within the Left. Over the last two years NAM's Perspective has increasingly emphasized the necessity for members to join or help form unions where they work and to participate in movements for union reform and democracy. We have initiated discussion on the role of unions and the role of socialists at the workplace, and we've done educationals on the labor movement and doing union organizing. In 1975 NAM adopted an experimental position on on-the-job organizing which stressed the importance of working for change from within--rather than in opposition to--the existing labor movement. Articles in our most recent Discussion Bulletin, #16, focused on the concrete problems and possibilities for socialists in unions (Detroit NAM Labor Committee) and current trends in labor (Dan Marshall-Chicago I NAM).

Most NAM chapters are establishing Labor Committees or appointing labor coordinators to strengthen their work in this area. Some NAM members--particularly in teachers and social service unions--hold union positions ranging from

shop steward to local president. (We publish internal newsletters for health workers and teachers to aid communication.) Other members are working to help organize unions. One growing area for unionization has been office workers organizing and NAM members in Pittsburgh, Dayton, Seattle, and Los Angeles are active in this work. We only have a few NAM members who work in steel, but NAM members in Pittsburgh, Seattle, Buffalo, and Springfield, Illinois, are working to build support for the Sadlowski campaign. And chapters around the country are planning to participate in organizing for the J.P. Stevens boycott.

We recognize that our work in the labor movement is still very limited and young, and that we have a lot to learn yet. But if the labor movement is reawakening after its somewhat fitful sleep, NAM can play a part in the changes that will come.

Union Maids

Union Maids, the film made by NAM members Julia Reichert and James Klein, continues to meet with wide acclaim across the country. Over 500 people attended the premiere in Los Angeles sponsored by NAM chapters there. And hundreds of people attended the recent Detroit and Pittsburgh NAM showing as well. The film is a moving description of three women's organizing experiences in the early industrial union movement. It combines interviews with these women with remarkable newsreel footage from the period they are recalling.

Union Maids has already been shown in a number of trade union education programs and women's groups--with overwhelmingly enthusiastic response. In addition, praise for the film has begun to come from around the world. Julia Reichert has been invited to an international film festival in Copenhagen. And the film is being shown in London, East Germany, Scotland, and France.

The film is available to NAM chapters through the National Office, which recently purchased its own print. Other may rent it from NEW Day Films, P.O. Box 315, Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417.

NAM Political Education Course

The course begins with sections on Marxist theory and methodology and then uses this base to analyze the situation in the U.S. today, and concludes with sections on revolutionary transformation. Each section consists of an introduction, a main reading, discussion questions, and an annotated bibliography. The course is designed to aid our development as revolutionaries, and is ideal for study groups. The course guide is available for \$1.00 from: NAM National Office, 1643 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago IL 60647.

Quality education stressed in Austin bussing fight

When the issue of bussing began to surface in Austin, Texas, a public hearing was held to get "orderly" public input. Austin NAM helped organize Citizens for Fair Bussing and Quality Education in order to challenge the Board of Education's limited ideas of what "public input" should involve. The Board was considering 16 different bussing plans and held only *one* hearing before reaching its decision. CFBQE demanded that hearings be held in all communities prior to choosing a final plan.

Their statement at the hearing stressed that they did not see bussing as any kind of ideal solution. but that the "stark failures of 'separate but equal' systems" demanded a change, and bussing is what the courts came up with. CFBQE criticized the fact that people in more well-off communities were excluded from the bussing plans and stressed that all groups should be included in the final plan.

The key point of the group, however, was that what counts is not simply bussing, but quality education. In its statement at the hearing CFBQE emphasized elements that would have to be part of a bussing plan for it to really address the needs of the most important group---the students themselves. Some of these were:

*Smaller classes.

*No tracking, but massive remedial programs for those identified as needing help

*More teacher evaluation with aid and support for teachers needing help

*New materials and resources for the multi-cultural, multi-level classrooms

*Parents to be offered jobs as counselor's aides in the schools their children are bussed to

*School time change so that elementary school children don't have to be at bus stops at dawn

There is a growing realization in this country that schools are not teaching children even the most elementary skills and knowledge. Part of the blame lies in a separate-but-equal policy of education that has characterized nearly every school system--North and South. Bussing is the only short-term solution to this situation. More basically the problem lies in inadequate funding and reactionary educational approaches. And bussing cannot solve these failures. Only a powerful movement of people of all races united for quality education for all can do that.



⁹ In These Times

In These Times, a national independent socialist weekly, has begun publication from Chicago. News coverage will include: struggles in South Africa, developments in the women's movement across the country, Sadlowski's insurgent campaign for the steelworkers' presidency, reviews of films, books and TV, community struggles fighting for better schools and housing, and more. The paper will present a critique of daily life and work under corporate capitalism as well as a vision of a democratic and socialist America. They are committed to the belief that a great many Americans are ready for a lively, sensible, and readable approach to these ideas. We urge you to subscribe by writing to: *In These Times*, 1501 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago IL 60647.

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WHO PROFESS
TO LOVE FREEDOM
AND YET
DEPRECATE
AGITATION
ARE MEN WHO
WANT CROPS
WITHOUT PLOWING.
THIS STRUGGLE
MAY BE
A MORAL ONE,
OR IT MAY BE
PHYSICAL,
BUT IT MUST BE
A STRUGGLE.
POWER
CONCEDES NOTHING
WITHOUT
A DEMAND. IT
NEVER DID
AND IT NEVER
WILL. *Frederick Douglass*
1857

NAM Newsletters

NAM is trying to help people who are doing similar work to keep in touch with each other and exchange experiences and information. One means of stimulating this process is through the following newsletters to which we urge you to subscribe for \$2/yearly:

**Campus-The Organizer* - William Johnson, 5100 S. Ellis, 2nd Fl., Chicago IL 60615

**Teachers-Teacher Unionism* - Anne Hill, 7125 McPherson Blvd., Pittsburgh PA 15208.

**Health* - Judy and Rick Kunnes, 19220 Litchfield, Detroit MI 48221.

Italian leftists criticize Communist strategy

NAM chapters in Pittsburgh, Detroit, and Chicago held meetings with three leading members of the Italian Party of Proletarian Unity (Partito di unita proletaria per il comunismo - PduP) through October as part of their U.S. tour on the East Coast and in the Midwest. Such meetings with Italian comrades are rare given the U.S. visa restraints, and the meetings were well attended, ranging from 50-300 people. Vittorio Foa, GianGiacomo Migone, and Andrea Ginzburg were excited and informative in analyzing the Italian elections, Political milieu, and the state of the Italian Left. They described the political perspective and strategies of PduP, as well as **their critique** of the current strategy of "historic compromise" pursued by the Italian Community Party (PCI).

The PduP was founded in 1974 and consists of an amalgamation of several important movements and tendencies including the left wing of the Catholic union federation and members of *Il Manifesto*, some of whom formerly belonged to the Central Committee of the PCI. They formed a coalition with other groups to the left of the PCI, called Proletarian Democracy, to participate in the June elections.

In speaking here, the PduP members explained that their party is critical of the current "historic compromise" strategy of the PCI. Although they recognize that the majority of the Italian working class now supports the PCI, they predict that its base will erode as the effects of its present policy become

10 clear. It's clear that there are many issues of importance to the American Left now being raised in Italy. One of the PduP visitors, Gian Giacomo Migone, criticized the U.S. government's policy of not allowing PCI members into this country. He stressed that it's important to hear "both sides" and to understand the complexity of the PCI approach as well as PduP's critique.

Sinn Fein rep speaks to NAM chapters

Marin de Burca, General Secretary of Sinn Fein, the political branch of the Irish Republican Army, met with interested people around the country, including NAM members in Chicago and Los Angeles in early Fall. She discussed the history, political perspective, and current strategies of Sinn Fein.

Sinn Fein-IRA is not to be confused with the Provisional IRA whose exclusive coverage in the American press leads many to believe that it is the only revolutionary movement in Ireland today. Sinn Fein condemns the violent and divisive tactics of the Provisionals and maintains that peace is the crucial first step towards building a movement fighting for a socialist Ireland. Within this framework, they ally themselves in critical support with the Peace Movement there, while continually underlining that peace is not the answer to the huge problems confronting the Irish working class.

The violence and accompanying fear and repression enormously exacerbate the difficulties involved in political organizing. "Sinn Fein," de Burca emphasized, "sees the real emergency as the economic emergency." She pointed-out that the government is using the perpetuation of wide-spread violence to direct attention to "law-and-order" concerns and controls, and has succeeded in deflecting attention from their responsibility for the serious problem of unemployment.

Much of the work of the organization emanates from its analysis of the two major problems in Ireland today---unemployment (officially over 13 percent) and the exportation of its natural resources to Britain and America. They are active in the trade union movement and organize around relevant issues such as needed social services. They are also involved in organizing concerning nationalization of natural resources.

In response to questions referring to the role played by the Catholic Church, de Burca stated that the Church exercises complete control over the educational system, one of the crucial settings where divisions among Catholics and Protestants is fostered. For instance, in Catholic schools, Irish history is taught exclusively. Whereas in Protestant schools, British history is emphasized. Sinn Fein is organizing toward a multi-denominational school system which they believe would contribute to the unification of the Irish working class.



In These Times caricature by Jim Yanagisawa

ACORN *from page 1*

ized drew 100 people. The local grievances had been discussed by the core group and, with advice from the organizers, they had chosen an issue to focus on first. Many residents had complained about the long walk to the nearest mailbox. That complaint was selected because it seemed within the group's ability to win. It was a good choice. A brief petition drive and a visit to the Post Office landed the group a new box in a convenient location. The quick win buoyed spirits. ACORN's first St. Louis affiliate was off the ground.

Each of seven St. Louis affiliates was methodically built in the same manner over the summer. The groups quickly broadened their concerns to city-wide matters. Fighting a Bell Telephone rate hike became their first coordinated effort.

As fall set in, Missouri ACORN turned its attention to the sales tax initiative. They were up against formidable odds. Concerned Citizens Against the Food and Drug Sales Tax Amendment had already begun a well financed drive. They were bankrolled by the biggest corporations in the state ---Monsanto, Emerson Electric, Ralston Purina,, National Supermarkets, Armco Steel, First National Bank of St. Louis, Pet, Inc.

ACORN was able to win the support of some labor groups and received donations and organizational help from the AFL-CIO, the CWA, the Steelworkers and the ILGWU. They also received the endorsement of the state's largest newspaper, the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*. Still they were outspent by ten to one on the campaign.

What was at stake went much deeper than the sales tax alone. The state stood to lose \$140,000,000 in revenue if the amendment passed. That money would have to be made up somewhere, and the corporations were afraid that they would be the target. Concerned Citizens' campaign was designed to divide upper and middle income people from lower income people. They argued that the new burden would be placed on income tax payers. (Missouri's income tax is hardly a model of progress in any case. It sports an absolutely flat rate from \$9000 on up.)

In the end Concerned Citizens was able to scare enough voters to beat back the amendment---57 per cent to 43 per cent---on election day.

But ACORN is undaunted. "We still have our neighborhood groups," says organizer Kim McGlaughlin. They hope to grow from seven to twenty associated groups in the next year, in the process building the size organization that is really needed to win big campaigns. They plan on organizing an explicitly political arm---a Political Action Committee---as their Arkansas people have done. They plan to continue to organize around local issues (rats, vacant lots and the like) and city-wide matters (the sales tax, red-lining, utility rates, etc.).

If Arkansas ACORN is any indication of what's ahead in Missouri, it is likely that the sales tax setback is only temporary. ACORN holds the majority of seats on the Pulaski County Justice of the Peace, Little Rock's County Legislature. St. Louis ACORN already hold the balance of power in several aldermanic districts in the city.

In spite of ACORN's aggressively anti-corporate approach, it is far from a popular expression of socialist politics, nor do its organizers have a strategy for transforming anti-corporate impulses into socialist commitment. According to St. Louis organizer Mike Bishop, "We let the neighborhood groups choose the issue on their own. We personally agree that it is the capitalist system that is the problem, and we are in agreement with your [NAM's] goals. But people have got to come to those conclusions on their own."

Most of the history of American movements for reform indicates the contrary. There is a need to self-consciously build socialist consciousness if these movements are to develop their full potential.

Nonetheless, ACORN's success indicates that an anti-corporate approach strikes a very responsive chord among large numbers of working people. And that is a very positive

(ACORN is not affiliated with NAM in any way. We are printing this report on its activities because we thin it's important for NAM to be in touch with and analyze the work being done in the "new populist" movement.)

NAM Speakers Bureau

In an effort to reach broader groups and greater numbers of people, NAM has established a Speakers Bureau that offers speakers -- NAM members and not -- who offer a socialist perspective on the world. The list includes activists with first-hand experience in some of the most significant struggles of our time and creative approaches to building a left in contemporary America. Listed below are some of the speakers available:

- ***Dorothy Healey** - *The Struggle for Socialism Today*
- ***James Weinstein** - *American Socialist History*
- ***Barbara Ehrenreich** - *Socialist-Feminism*
- ***Stanley Aronowitz** - *Politics and Culture*
- ***Roberta Lynch, Richard Healey, or Nick Rabkin** - *NAM and the State of the Left in the U.S.*

If you are interested in reviewing the other 30 speakers described in the brochure or are interested in more information on any of these speakers, please direct inquiries to: NAM Speakers Bureau, NAM National Office, 1643 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago IL 60647.

Utilities movement *from page 1*

steam, petitioners were out on street corners and shopping centers around the state. By the deadline, they had collected the necessary 350,000 signatures and the battle moved to a new level. It was now decided by the people that the November ballot should include proposals on four utilities-related issues: a Lifeline rate structure; an insitutionalized state consumer action group; regulation of nuclear power development; reform of the initiative process itself.

At this point the utilities companies got into the act in a big way. They created a "citizens" front group that ran full page ads in the local dailies and they poured huge amounts of money into propaganda against the initiative. It had its effect for despite impressive coalitions of labor and community groups in every major city in Ohio, the referendum (all four parts) lost.

But the outcome of the referendum is only part of the story. In the course of the referendum campaigns hundreds of people around the state became active organizers for the first time. Hundreds more helped to collect signatures on petitions. And literally hundreds of thousands heard about and indicated their support for the campaign. These people provide a solid base for the continuing campaign that the MVPP plans to wage. The referendum is only one tactic and one step in a long and difficult struggle against a powerful antagonist.

Pittsburgh NAM has also been working for two years now to build a utilities movement that can take on the local electric company, Duquesne Light. They have organized demonstrations, brought community people to public hearings, gotten the issue into all the media, and built a coalition to push for Lifeline in the state legislature. An important aspect of their work has been meeting with and fostering the involvement of community groups, union locals, and Black groups. To help this process they have produced a slide show, *People Pay*, which they are showing around the city.

The *People's Power Project* of NAM was influential in mobilizing forces to get the local regulatory board to stop the Duquesne Light Company from automatically passing on costs increases to its users. And the coalition they've built around Lifeline is now prodding enabling legislation through. They continue to fight on the basic issue of opposition to rate hikes as well. In mid-November, the PPP sponsored a demonstration of over 100 people at Duquesne Light's office to protest a proposed \$128 million rate hike.

Buffalo NAM, Chicago 1, St. Louis, Detroit, and Mother Jones (Springfield) are also active in utilities organizing. In order to coordinate and help strengthen this work the Industrial Heartland region is sponsoring a conference on utilities organizing, scheduled for February. The conference

will feature discussion of strategy and tactics against the utilities companies, educational on utilities-related issues, and skills workshops.

Complicated and important issues are involved in the utilities struggles---questions of jobs and workers rights, questions of nuclear power and the environment, questions of public ownership and capitalist control. To the extent that the utilities movement grows in strength and sophistication, it will be forced to choose directions on all of these issues. Our involvement as socialists can help to determine this direction.



photo by environmental action

from page 3

course that we've embarked upon. Our efforts to participate in and help build working people's organization; our refusal to get mired in often empty left debates; and our insistence on the necessity not to allow dogma to blind us to where and in what form progressive trends emerge---these are the characteristics that we need to continue to emphasize.

But we also need to recognize the difficulty of the path that we've chosen. We are trying to build an organization that is at once coherent and genuinely democratic. We are trying to work actively in mass organizations that have a history of anti-communism, as open socialists. We are trying to build a socialist movement in a period of limited mass ferment. And we are trying to develop a revolutionary theory, strategy, and program based on the American reality.

The fifth annual NAM Convention, held in August in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, is an important indicator of the changes that have come about in NAM as we have tried to balance these concerns. We have learned that democracy does not mean looseness or lack of leadership and have instituted pro-

visions for "unity in action" and elected a full-time three-person leadership body. We have begun to do long-term organizing in workplaces and communities and now have members who are known as socialists and are leading members of union locals or community organizations. We have gained visibility for NAM in many of the smaller cities where we're located and have used a variety of public educational forms to present a socialist perspective. And we have initiated chapter study programs, developed a basic political education program, and held organizational summer schools to aid the ability of all members to participate in the development of theory and strategy.

There is no doubt that we are still a long way from being a real political force. There is also no doubt that the American Left still has many difficult lessons to learn before it will really be able to build a popular movement for socialism. But, we believe that NAM is moving in a sound direction and that if we carefully evaluate our work and learn from both our successes and our mistakes, we will be able to contribute to that process.

Resources

Women's packet on Chile: a packet of materials designed for women concerned with repression in Chile -- especially of women -- prepared by Action for Women in Chile. Contains a powerful poster, information on cases, and suggestions for action. Send \$1.25 to AFWIC, Box 530, Cathedral Station, New York NY 10025.

Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography. This journal is a little too specialized for most of us, but check-out the issue for March 1976 (Vol. 8 -1). It is on "Urban Political Economy," and worth spending some time on. Order for \$2.00 from: P.O. Box 225, West Side Station, Worcester MA 01602.

Kapital State: Working Papers on the Capitalist State. The Summer 1976 issue (No. 4-5) is excellent---it is focused on the "Urban Crisis and the Capitalist State." Somewhat abstract and intellectually-oriented. Order for \$2.50 from: Jim O'Connor, Dept. of Economics, California State University, San Jose CA 95114.

Gonna Rise Again! Economic Organizing for Hard Times. This booklet has three sections. Articles providing analyses, strategies, and an overview of the problem. Examples of groups that are working for social change. And a resource section (books, articles, films, etc.) for more extensive information and analysis. Order for \$1.75 from: Resources for Community Change, P.O. Box 21066, Washington DC 20009.

Lenin, Volume 2, by Tony Cliff. The second volume of this extremely good biography of Lenin is now out. Order from: Sun Distribution International, 14131 Woodward Ave., Detroit MI 48203.

Organize! A Working Woman's Handbook. A clear, well-written handbook from a group that has built one of the most successful working women's organization. It contains sections on how to organize a union, building a rank-and-file caucus, putting out your own newsletter and more. Order for \$2.50 from: Union WAGE Educational Committee, P.O. Box 461, Berkeley, CA 94701.

Southern Africa. A monthly periodical with features, news and analysis focusing on the liberation struggle in Southern Africa. Order for \$8 for an annual subscription from: Southern African Committee, 156 5th Ave., NY, NY 10010.

Washington Office on Africa does research on American policy in Africa. They will send free material if you write them at: 110 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002.

East Bay Voice. The monthly newspaper of East Bay NAM. Interesting and beautifully laid out. Out-of-town subs are \$5 yearly from: 486 55th St., Oakland, CA 94609.

Link. Newsletter from the Institute for Policy Studies contains articles on social, political and economic policies. Ten times yearly for \$2 from: 1901 Que St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

Benchmark. Irregular reports of political and economic analysis from the IPS Political Economy Program Center. Free. same address as above.

The Black Scholar. Monthly magazine of, by, and for the black liberation movement. Probably the best way to keep in touch with the various trends in the black movement. Annual subscription is \$15 yearly from: The Black Scholar, 2658 Bridge Way, Sausalito CA 94965.

All literature listed below is available from the NAM National Office, 1643 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago IL 60647. Please send payment with order and include 5 percent of total fee for postage. Groups should inquire about consignment orders.

- NAM Political Perspective** - Basic principles of the New American Movement, written at the organization's founding convention. (25 cents each; 15 cents for 10 or more)
- Working Papers on Socialist-Feminism** - Collection of articles from NAM newspaper and the discussion bulletins on socialist politics, Third World women, and women in the labor movement. (50 cents each; 35 cents each for 10 or more)
- NAM General Brochure** - Short, popular explanation of what NAM stands for. (5 cents each; 2 cents each for 10 or more)
- Convention Papers '75** - Includes NAM's strategic approach in the present period and NAM's position on workplace organizing and trade union work. (75 cents each; 60 cents for 10 or more)
- Organizing a Socialist Student Movement** - Pamphlet presenting an approach to organizing students on college campuses today. (25 cents each; 20 cents each for 15 or more)
- Basic Political Education Course** - a 13 session course that includes basic elements of Marxist theory and contemporary socialist politics. Each section includes overview, core readings, discussion questions, and bibliography. (\$1 each)
- New American Movement: An Introductory Course** - A short course that includes a history of NAM and an explanation of the NAM Political Perspective and current organizational debates. (50 cents each)
- Building a Chapter of the New American Movement** - A helpful manual with information on internal organization, developing local strategies, recruitment, and other topics. (50 cents each)
- Discussion Bulletin** - Internal debate and analyses of programmatic work with NAM. (\$1 each for current issue; 75 cents each for 10 or more - 75 cents each for back issues; 60 cents each for 10 or more)
- International Women's Day Poster** - Beautiful and brightly colored poster - 18 x 22 inches. (\$1.50 each; \$1 for 10 or more)
- What's Wrong with the American Economy?** Pamphlet by Barbara and John Ehrenreich. Discusses the current economic situation and explains why capitalism can't meet our needs. Written in a popular style. (10 cents each; 5 cents each for 10 or more)
- Unemployment: What's Ahead?** Pamphlet by Dave Ranney. Discusses the effects of the economic crisis in terms of unemployment and analyzes what we can expect in the near future. (10 cents each; 5 cents each for 10 or more)
- Processed Ideas and Packaged Dreams** - Pamphlet by Elayne Rapping. Discusses the way that media, the schools, and other cultural forces combine to create false consciousness. (10 cents each; 5 cents each for 10 or more)
- New American Movement** - Monthly newspaper of NAM. Order from: NAM, 16 Union Square, Somerville, MA 02143. (\$4 per year)
- Moving On** - Published three times a year as an organizational newsletter. (\$1 per year)
- Discussion Bulletin** - Published three times a year as an organizational newsletter. (\$6 per 6 issues)

-Complete Literature Lists are available from the NAM National Office-

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